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Preached before the

Right Honourable

THE

LORD MAYOR

AND THE

ALDERMEN

OF THE

City of LONDON

At *Guild-Hall* Chappel, *Octob.* 31. 1680.

Being the XXI. Sunday after TRINITY.

By *SYMON PATRICK*, D.D.
DEAN of *PETERBURGH*, and Chaplain
in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

LONDON, Printed by *J. M.* for *R. Royston*
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To the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sir *PATIENCE WARD*

Lord Mayor

Of the CITY of

LONDON.

Right Honourable,

IT is so hard, on some occasions, to be a thoroughly good Christian, and much more to be such a Magistrate; that some have given over the endeavour of it, out of a perswasion, that it is impossible. Which, as it proceeds from great ignorance of the Christian Religion so, would be a great disparagement to it; if our blessed Saviour, and his Apostles, had not taken special care, not only to breed in us a quite contrary opinion; but also to raise our minds to the

higheſt degree of confidence, that we ſhall be able, by the Divine aſſiſtance, to ſurmount the greateſt difficulties.

This I have endeavoured, in as plain a manner as I could deviſe, to preſs in this Sermon; which by the deſire of that Honourable Court, where Your Lordſhip preſides, I now humbly preſent to Your and the publick view. Which will do the more good, I hope, not only becauſe Your Lordſhip judged it very ſeaſonable at Your entrance upon Your Office, but becauſe I was directed to this ſubject, not ſo much by my own Prudence, as by a kind of Divine Providence: which I have oft obſerved on the like occaſions.

For, having in the common courſe of my Sermons this year, at my own Pariſh, Preached upon ſome part of the Epiſtle *for the Day, I found there was no need to go out of my way to meet with a fitting Argument; upon that* Sunday *when I was appointed to preach to Your Lordſhip. And therefore I ſought no further, but applyed my ſelf to proſecute the firſt words, which occurred there: and that, not with ſuch matter as humane invention might have furniſhed me withall; but ſuch as the Apoſtle himſelf ſuggeſted, in the reſt of the* Epiſtle *for that day.*

And indeed, they are matters of great and weigh-

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ty importance; which, though there be many of them, I have both comprehended in a little room, and also made them not hard to be remembred; because I have considered them as relating all to one and the same end; and as having, not only the same scope, but, such a dependance also one upon another, that they cannot well be separated. I am sure where they are all united, there the Divine Blessing will be; for they are the compleat Armour of God, *that heavenly defence, which will certainly secure us in our station; if we will but make use of it, with a mind to be and to do whatsoever Christ would have us.*

The first *step toward which, is* rightly to understand our duty; *as should have been pressed more largely, if I had had room enough; from those words,* be girt about with Truth. *In which if we be defective, we shall miscarry, do what we can; and the more Zealous we are, the more we shall be out of the way. But it is not likely we shall be defective in any material part of Christian Knowledge, if to our serious study of a right understanding and judgment in all things, we add (according to the last Advice in this discourse) most earnest prayer to God for his direction, guidance, and assistance; and can appeal to Him, in such words as those of* David *(which are full of sincere affection) that we are heartily resolved, to*

do

do whatſoever we know to be our duty; and that there is nothing we long for ſo much in this world, as to know it intirely, CXIX. Pſal. 34, 35. Give me underſtanding, and I ſhall keep thy law: yea, I ſhall obſerve it with my whole heart. Make me to go, in the path of thy Commandments; for therein do I delight.

Which that Your Lordſhip may alwayes do, and thereby acquit your ſelf, in your difficult charge, to the general ſatisfaction of all good men, is the hearty prayer of

My LORD,

Your moſt humble Servant,

S. PATRICK.

A SERMON

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LORD MAYOR and ALDERMEN

Of the CITY of

LONDON.

EPHES. VI. 10.

Finally, my Brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

I Have chosen, you see, for your present instruction, *Right Honourable and wellbeloved*, the beginning of the *Epistle* for this Day. In the first word of which the Apostle

 signifies,

ſignifies, that he was drawing to a concluſion of this Letter, to the Chriſtian Church at *Epheſus*. *Finally, my Brethren*, I have nothing more to add, but this; all that remains is to exhort you, to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*.

He had made his moſt earneſt Prayer to God in the middle of this Epiſtle (iii. 14, *&c.*) that he would *grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthned with might by his ſpirit, in the inner man*: that ſo they might be able to perform all their Chriſtian duty; which follows in the inſuing part of the Epiſtle, till you come to my Text. In which he puts them in mind that it was not ſufficient to receive ſtrength from Heaven, in their inner man: but they muſt alſo *be ſtrong*, or *ſtrengthen themſelves*; not indeed in themſelves, but *in the Lord*, in that heavenly ſtrength which our bleſſed Saviour gives us, and *in the power of his might*, wherewith He will always aſſiſt our weakneſs.

There lyes the ſecurity of Chriſtians; from whom our Saviour expects a faithful obedience, both in their ſingle, and in their relative capacity, either as Men or Women, or as Husbands or Wives, as Parents or Children, as Maſters

Maſters or Servants, (all whoſe duties the Apoſtle had juſt before moſt punctually ſet down) becauſe He requires no impoſſible thing; but ſuch an obedience as he ſtrengthens us with might, by his ſpirit, to perform: if we will but be careful and diligent to ſtrengthen our ſelves *in him, and in the power of his might.*

In which words we cannot but obſerve theſe *two* things.

Firſt, A Chriſtian duty incumbent upon them; which was to *be ſtrong*, or to ſtrengthen themſelves: For it is an Exhortation of the Apoſtle to the *Epheſians*; whom he charges with this, as the very upſhort of his foregoing diſcourſe.

Secondly, The ability they had to perform this duty, which is *in*, or *by the Lord*: For there he tells them their ſtrength lyes; *in him, and in the power of his might*; that is, in his mighty inſuperable power.

The *firſt* of which ſuppoſes that they would need a great deal of courage and reſolution (for that is to *be ſtrong*, in the Apoſtles language) to be able to do their duty,

in all relations, in all times, and in all conditions and circumſtances of life.

The *ſecond* ſuppoſes, that their own *natural* courage, or mere *Philoſophical Reſolution*, called *Fortitude*, would not be ſufficient to carry them through all difficulties: but upon ſome occaſions their ſpirit would quail, unleſs they were ſupported by a diviner ſort of Vertue; which he calls being *ſtrong in the Lord*. By the *Lord* meaning our Bleſſed Saviour; who bred in his Diſciples ſouls a new kind of valour, which men were not acquainted withal before; or of which we read nothing in the Books of mere Philoſophers. For as they do ſay little or nothing of that truſt and confidence, which all good men ought to repoſe in God, and of a vigorous application of their mind to Him, for ſtrength and reſolution to be truly vertuous: ſo they *could* ſay nothing, of ſuch devoute addreſſes to our Lord for it.

Who ſending his Apoſtles into the world to propagate his Religion, which was ſure to meet with mighty oppoſition, furniſhed them with a ſuitable courage: which they indeavoured to infuſe into all others; who by entertaining their Doctrine, might have need of

of the like vertue. Which is this here in my text; of a quite different ſort from thoſe now named: For it ariſes not from natural heat, or from the mere ſoundneſs of our natural principles of reaſon, and the honeſt reſolution which we have firmly built thereupon: but from a far higher original, the mighty, invincible power of the Lord Jeſus, which was always in their eye, and on which they ſtedfaſtly relyed. As there was very great need; having other kind of enemies to grapple withal, than mere natural men thought of; not meerly *with fleſh and blood*, (as it follows after my text) that is, with humane powers and their ſavage malice and cruelty: but with the Devil and his Angels; who did all they could to diſhearten them, and hinder their ſpreading of this Religion: For which end they inſtigated both the *Jewiſh* Rulers, and *Heathen* Kings and Princes, to perſecute them with the greateſt rage, and the moſt Diabolical fury.

And the very ſame powers of Hell, we have reaſon to think, are now at work to confound us and our Religion. The Reformation of which was little leſs wonderful, in one

one regard, than the firſt publication of the Goſpel. For it flew like lightning; and, on a ſudden, all theſe northern Countries purged themſelves, from the Romiſh pollutions, with a marvellous conſent: as ſwiftly and in as ſhort a ſpace of time, as the Goſpel, at its firſt Preaching, ran among the Gentiles; and excited them to free themſelves from Pagan Idolatries. And immediately the Devil ſet his Agents at work, to diſgrace and ſpoil the Reformation by Sects and Hereſies; and to deter men from embracing it, by the moſt dreadful puniſhments: juſt as when the Goſpel broke out, he laboured to uphold his Authority by the like arts and inſtruments of deceit and cruelty.

And now the powers of darkneſs ſeem to be making their very laſt attempt in theſe Countries; to overthrow that, which was ſo happily, and by ſuch an extraordinary hand of God eſtabliſhed. And who knows but their fury may proceed to ſuch violence, as without an extraordinary courage, we ſhall not be able *to ſtand faſt in the Faith, to quit our ſelves like men, and to be ſtrong*; as the Apoſtle exhorts in the 1 Cor. xvi. 13?

We

We had beſt therefore fortifie our ſelves beforehand with a good ſtock of this Divine Vertue: which we ſhall have great uſe of upon other occaſions (though by the merciful Providence of God that trial of it ſhould be prevented, for which we humbly pray and hope) to inable us to do, as well as to ſuffer all things that would hinder our doing the will of God. I am not able to ſay, to which of theſe my Text moſt relates: whether to the words foregoing, or to thoſe that follow. But which way ſoever we take them, there will be little or no difference: and it will be beſt to refer them to both. Becauſe the power of Chriſt is as neceſſary for us to enable us to diſcharge thoſe Chriſtian duties before mentioned; as to withſtand thoſe trials which he tells the *Epheſians* in the Verſes following, would diſcourage and diſhearten them in their obedience.

Now to the end, that we may be furniſhed with a ſufficient ſtrength for both; I ſhall do theſe two things;

Firſt, Shew you wherein this duty conſiſts, of being ſtrong, or ſtrengthening our ſelves in the Lord, and in his mighty power.

Secondly,

Secondly, What our work is, or what we have to do, that we may be indued with this mighty Vertue.

I.

For the first of these; by the LORD being meant, as I said, our blessed Saviour, who laying down his life for us, is raised again, and made the *Lord of all* (all power in Heaven and in Earth being given to him, as he himself told his Apostles and afterward was proved by sensible effects) *to be strong in him* consists in these *three* things.

1. First, *To be possessed with a lively faith of the Power and Glory, which our Lord now hath at Gods right hand.*

2. Secondly, *To keep this Faith alive in our hearts, that it may make us on all occasions repair to Him: representing Him always as actually present to us, by the Power of his might to aid and succour us.*

3. Thirdly, *In this Faith to be stedfastly resolved to stick to him, and not to stir from the duty He enjoins us: notwithstanding any thing that may oppose us, to discourage, nay indanger us in the doing of it.*

Of

Of theſe we have ſuch frequent occaſion to treat, at ſome time or other, that it may be ſufficient now only to repeat them.

1. We muſt repreſent the Majeſty and Power, wherein our Lord reigns at Gods right hand, ſo ſtrongly to our ſouls, that they be poſſeſſed with a pregnant and lively ſenſe of it; and be diſpoſed thereby to depend upon him continually, as an Almighty Saviour.

2. And then this Faith, when it is ſettled in our hearts, we muſt actuate and excite; that it may make us look upon Him as preſent with us, at all times, by his Almighty Power; to aid and aſſiſt us, to ſupport and comfort us; as well as able at laſt Eternally to reward us.

3. And laſtly, This Faith muſt ſettle in us a firm reſolution and purpoſe to adhere to his ſervice, and reſiſt all temptations to the contrary; till by his Power we overcome them, and remain faithful to the very death, expecting from him the Crown of Life.

This He expects from us, and this we muſt charge our ſelves withal; and be faith-

ful to it, and ſtedfaſt in it. For if we doubt not of His Power, why ſhould we not depend upon it; and, by the force of it, do that for which He communicates it unto us? Hath He not made us *many pretious Promiſes, that by them we may be partakers of a Divine Nature?* Hath He not ſaid, He will *be with us, and give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it, and never leave us nor forſake us, but be our helper, and deliverer?* Hath He not bid us, *not fear them that can do no more but kill the body; but fear Him that can throw both Soul and Body into Hell?* and repeated it again; that we ſhould *fear* this great Lord; fear to offend Him, fear to loſe His favour, and the *glorious hope He hath ſet before us?* Hath He not bid us *lay hold on this hope*; and *hold faſt our confidence and the rejoycing of our hope unto the end?* Hath He not bid us truſt to this, that *ſtronger is He that is in us, than he that is in the world?* than the Devil, and all his partakers and inſtruments? who have no power to hurt us, unleſs He conſent to it; and in that caſe, the thing we account a hurt, ſhall *work together for our good?*

We are not Chriſtians, if we believe not this. And what is there more to be believed, but that He hath power to make good his

his word? And how can we queſtion that; when we remember that He is the LORD? whoſe power is no leſs large than his deſire: So that He cannot be inclined by his good will, to deſign or to promiſe any kindneſs to his Servants; which He hath not equal ability actually to perform.

He doth not merely wiſh us well; nor can He be ſuſpected ever to find any impotency in himſelf, whereby He ſhould be diſabled from expreſſing the love which we think He bears us. And therefore He cannot be more forward, either to conceive good intentions towards us, or to make us promiſes of the good He intends; than He is ready and able to do, to the full, what He purpoſes and what He promiſes.

The conſideration of which power of his, is the great ſupport of our Faith, when we read any of his *exceeding great and pretious promiſes* in the Holy Scriptures: and ſhould make us heartily depend upon them, and with a ſettled reſolution go about our duty, in an unſhaken confidence of their performance.

To this Power of God it was that *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, had reſpect, when

God promiſed to give him an heir; though an impoſſible thing in Nature. *He ſtaggered not at the promiſe through unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith giving glory to God, being fully perſwaded that what He had promiſed, He was able alſo to perform*, iv. Rom. 20, 21. The object of his faith was the *promiſe of God*; who, as He had never deceived him ſo, he knew could not be worſe than his word. But that which preſerved him from *ſtaggering* at ſuch a Promiſe as this, was his laying hold on the Power of God: which made him *ſtrong in faith*. And the *Glory he gave to God*, was his conceiving ſo highly and magnificently of his Power, as nothing to doubt of what He had ſaid; nor in the leaſt to imagine the thing He promiſed was beyond it: but to reſt *fully perſwaded* that He was no leſs able to perform, than He was willing to promiſe it.

The like ſtrong Faith we ought to have in the power of our Lord Chriſt; from whoſe Majeſty we ſhall extreamly derogate, if we think there is any thing too hard for Him to do. But to think He cannot do what He hath promiſed to do for us, is to blemiſh Him with ſuch a weakneſs, that there cannot be a greater diſparagement to Him. For

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though it be no diſcredit to one of us, not to be able to do every thing, that another man can do: yet to put our Friends in hope and expectation, by promiſes, of what we know is without the reach of our abilities, is ſuch a diſhonour; that it reflects ſcorn and contempt in the face of thoſe who are guilty of it. And therefore if it could be conceived (which we ought not in the leaſt to admit) that our Bleſſed Lord hath any weakneſs or defect of Power in Him; yet ſo great a defect as this, to promiſe things which He cannot make good to thoſe that believe them and depend upon them, muſt need be far removed from Him. And we being ſure that the ſame Goodneſs and Love which moved Him to make thoſe promiſes of Grace and ſtrength to us, will move Him to imploy his Power to communicate them; we ought to truſt to this, and with an aſſured Faith depend upon His powerful Goodneſs: and in that Faith ſtedfaſtly and couragiouſly perform moſt conſtant obedience to Him; who, we are ſure, cannot fail us.

II.

But that we may not deceive our ſelves with

with a falſe dependance on Him, nor vainly truſt to his Almighty Power for our aid, let us always remember (which will bring me to the *ſecond* thing I propounded) that it is *ſuch a Faith in Him, and dependance on Him, as makes us uſe all the means which He hath appointed, in conjunction with our truſt in his might, for our preſervation.* Elſe it is not a right Faith in the power of his Might, nor will derive the communications of it into our ſouls: for He that bids us confide in that, requires us alſo to do many other things; in the exerciſe of which, He tells us, we may be confident his Power will give us the better. And if we believe as we ought, we ſhall take his word as much for the one, as for the other.

According to which Doctrine, the Apoſtle (who could beſt explain his own mind) immediately adds this injunction, in the words after my Text, *Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the Devil.* It was not enough it ſeems barely to confide in the invincible ſtrength of the Lord Jeſus; but they muſt put their own hand to the work, and prepare themſelves for the incounter, and valiantly, when occaſion was, enter into it and ſuſtain it.

For

For oppoſition we muſt expect, as the Apoſtle ſhows *verſ.* 12. and great oppoſition, from very powerful, very ſubtil, very induſtrious, and likewiſe inviſible Enemies. *For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers, againſt the Rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places.* Who among other ways they have to trouble us, ſtir up the ſpirits of evil men to give us all the diſturbance, and do us all the miſchief, that is in their power; and ſtir them up to ſo high a degree of rage, that they perſecute us many times with ſuch inhumane malice and cruelty, *as fleſh and blood* could not invent; were it not acted by a Diabolical fury.

This mighty and frightful oppoſition we are apt to make an Argument, why we cannot hold out, but ſhould deſpair of being able to do our duty. But the Apoſtle, quite contrary, makes it an Argument why we ſhould be ſtrong, and reſolved, and watchful, and ready arm'd againſt all temptations, and able to ſtand: becauſe we have to do with ſuch potent and crafty Enemies, who are ſo much above us, *in high places*; from whence they can more eaſily aſſault us.

This

This he repeats again, *verſ.* 13. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God*; that is, becauſe you have ſo many, ſo great and dangerous Enemies to conflict withal, *take unto you* (to put it on, that is,) that Divine Armour which God himſelf furniſhes you withal, and let no part of it be wanting, but be intirely at all times covered with it; that ſo *you may be able to withſtand* or to reſiſt with conſtancy and patience, *in the evil day*; or the time when you muſt indure many calamities for Chriſts ſake: *And having done all to ſtand*; that is, having compleated your reſiſtance, by an unyielding reſolution to conſent to nothing againſt your duty, you may remain as conquerours over all thoſe Enemies that aſſaulted you.

Stand therefore, verſ. 14. he repeats it a *third* time, the more to imprint their Duty in their mind; and to excite and encourage them unto it. He would not have them doubt of getting the better; but be confident they ſhould be able to withſtand all manner of oppoſition: provided they put on intirely that compleat Armour, which he was about to recommend to them from God himſelf. Without that, their confidence e-

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ven in Chriſt, and his mighty Power, would not keep them in ſafety: but they were to truſt in Him; imploying thoſe weapons which He had given them for their defence and ſecurity.

Let me therefore briefly explain them, that you may ſee what you have to do, if you would *be ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of his might.* In which it is impoſſible, that any body ſhould be able to direct you, ſo well as the Apoſtle himſelf: and therefore I ſhall ſeek for no other means of attaining this Divine ſtrength; but thoſe which he hath ſet down in the remaining part of the Epiſtle for this day.

I. And *firſt*, you muſt take care, *to have your loyns girt about with truth*, verſ. 14. that is, with a true underſtanding of all things, that concern our duty, ſafety and happineſs. Which we can receive from no place ſo certainly, and ſo amply, as from the Revelation our Lord hath made of the mind of God to us in his Goſpel, which is called *the word of truth*: teaching us, both what is true and falſe, and what is good and evil, ſo fully; that we want no neceſſary Information, Di-

rection, or incouragement in our Christian warfare. Only, we must make it our business throughly to understand the mind of God, and to let it sit close to our hearts: for that is to have it *girt about us*.

This will make us ready against all assaults, and they will find us better prepared to receive them: we shall be the more at liberty, and have nothing interpose to intangle our mind, and hinder us from doing our duty. For that was the end of a Souldiers girding up his cloaths about his loyns; that he might be the more nimble, and expedite in action; when he was not incumbred by his garments, hanging loosely about his heels. Such will the clear knowledge of things, especially of *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, render our minds. Which will find themselves fit for any service, and able to perform it with ease and freedom: when they are delivered by this illumination, from all vain opinions about those things which we call Good and Evil in this world; from all false principles; from causeless doubts and scruples; from confusion of thoughts, and uncertainty of mind; which weaken and discourage the hearts of men, in any incounters with their spiritual enemies.

Whose

Whoſe great advantage lyes in our ignorance and folly, miſtakes and falſe perſwaſions; which this Divine Light ſhining in us will chaſe away; and let us ſee through all the thin pretences whereby we are tempted to commit any Sin, or to neglect our duty; and make the vanity of them ſo tranſparent, that we ſhall never be cheated by them any more.

For Truth is great and will prevail; not indeed unleſs it be ſeated and rooted in our minds; but if it have taken faſt hold there, it hath the Lord on its ſide; whoſe mighty power reſides there where his ſacred Truth doth: which being the ſenſe of his own mind, is ſomething of himſelf reſiding in us.

There would not, for inſtance, be ſo many deſerters, and revolters from their Religion, ſo many cowardly and timerous ſpirits who will do nothing for it, ſo many cold and indifferent perſons who care not what becomes of it; if we underſtood the truth of it better, and its principles did not hang looſe in our minds: but we had a lively ſenſe of its excellency, purity, ſimplicity, and Divine original. Which would preſerve us alſo from doing any thing unbecoming our

Religion, while we make profeſſion of it, and pretend to admire it, and love it, and to endeavour to preſerve it. For who could act contrary to its principles, whoſe heart were affected deeply with this ſingle truth; that *he who knows his Maſters will and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes?* It will go exceeding hard with that man, and he will lye under the ſevereſt laſhes of his own Conſcience, as well as under the heavy diſpleaſure of his Lord and Maſter: who taught him the *way of God in truth*, if he would have taken care, and ſet his heart, to walk in it. Which leads me to the next.

II. Unto this clear knowledg of the truth as it is in Chriſt, we muſt add the *Breſt-plate of Righteouſneſs*. Which is nothing elſe, but integrity of heart, and loyal Affection to our bleſſed Lord and Maſter Chriſt: a ſincere and unfeigned love to the buſineſs of Chriſtianity; which we underſtand to be the will of God.

For a *Breſt-plate* you know is the defence of the region of the heart; and *Righteouſneſs* I take here to be as much as uprightneſs and ſincerity in what we pretend: and therefore both

both put together ſignifie the unfeigned bent of our will, the cordial conſent of our heart and affection, to all that we know to be the mind of Chriſt; aiming at nothing in the world, but to keep a good Conſcience; and thereby to preſerve the love of God, and at laſt to obtain favour with Him in the day of the Lord.

Which, beſides that it is moſt highly eſteemed by our bleſſed Saviour, above all knowledge and wiſdom in the world, and may certainly depend upon His power for the maintenance of that which is ſo dear unto Him; hath many ſingular advantages in it, to make us ſucceſsful in our Chriſtian warfare.

For a conſtant ſenſe of our fidelity to our Lord, naturally gives us a ſtronger confidence that He will be faithful unto us.

This makes us alſo as bold and fearleſs as Lyons; when we have nothing within to diſmay us: but all the reaſon in the world to be ſecure and confident, that we ſhall ſtill attain our end; which is, to approve our ſelves to our Lord and Maſter, whatſoever befals us.

And on the other ſide, nothing more

daunts

daunts all opposers, or strikes such a terror into our Enemies: who are in dread of those alone, who fear nothing but to lose their integrity.

If this be the sole thing we resolve to preserve, and upon no terms part withal, we shall have this advantage also by it; that we shall the more clearly discern what is the surest way to safety in dangerous times, if it may be had together with innocence. Whereas they that bend every way, and sail with every wind, where they think their worldly interest lyes; are alwayes blinded so much by that, as never to see the rocks upon which they run, and are split at last.

Now the surest mark of this integrity, is an equal uniform zeal for all manner of goodness and vertue, diffusing it self, like the spiritous blood from the heart, through the whole body of our Christian duty; though never so cross to our natural inclination, or worldly interest.

And (as this is the surest mark of it so) the surest way to preserve it, is to give daily proofs of it to our selves, upon all such occasions as continually present themselves:

which

which will wonderfully incourage and animate us to go on, when we meet, at any time, with more dangerous opposition. This will make us undaunted, in case any hard service be put upon us, when we are not conscious to our selves of any hypocrisie, or base design, or unworthy behaviour, in lesser trials of our Christian resolution, in the daily, common course of our life: Or if at any time we have prevaricated, our Repentance for it hath been so sincere, that in those instances, especially wherein we did not keep our Faith with God, we since have approved our selves better unto Him, and given testimony of our renewed, seeled purposes, by no means to displease Him.

This will arm us against the most terrible impressions that can be made upon us by the enemy of mankind; against the forest sufferings, of which the Apostle here particularly speaks; even against Death it self, the last and greatest Enemy we have to conflict withal, in whatsoever shape it shall approach us.

To be conscious then to our selves of no enormous crime, or to call to mind how solicitously

licitouſly we have made our peace with God, and what full ſatisfaction we have given, for any injury done to our neighbour; to have nothing then to againſt us; nothing to fill us with pale fears; no guilt, unrepented of, to ſtare us in the face and threaten us; will be as good a Breſt-plate, as if we were inviron'd with a wall of Braſs. 'Take a man 'that is juſt and upright, unmoveable from 'his honeſt purpoſe, that hath ſetled a firm 'love to Goodneſs in his Soul; and neither 'the rage of the People, nor the countenance 'of ſtern Tyrants, commanding him wicked 'things, will ſhake his ſolid mind: but 'though the world ſhould be ſuppoſed to 'crack, and break in pieces, and fall about 'his ears, the ruin of it will oppreſs a fearleſs 'perſon.

Thus an Ancient Poet could boaſt, inſpired only with a natural ſenſe, which he had of the courage and ſtrength, that true integrity and ſincere love to vertue, gives the heart of him in whom it dwells. He hath inward peace and tranquillity (as an upright Chriſtian feels more lively than any other man can do) which makes him leſs regard all outward accidents. Whereas, if a mans heart

heart correſpond not with what he knows to be the truth; what contentment can he have to ſuffer any thing for that, which doth him no good? Who can doubt but the covetous man will rather forſake the Truth, than his Riches; which he takes to be infinitely more pretious? and an ambitious man rather quit it than his preferment; and an intemperate man abandon it, than forego his pleaſure? For they have corrupted his Soul, and thereby made it weak and feeble: and deprived it of that Breaſt-plate, which a man that intirely loves the Truth, and follows it, is armed withal.

In one word, if we have not ſincerely practiſed that which we underſtand to be our duty, or if we have done it lamely and by halves: this will give us the moſt grievous wound, when we reflect upon it, and ſo gall our Conſciences; that we ſhall find it to be the ſharpeſt Enemy we have, in a day of trial.

III. But the Apoſtle further adviſes them, if they would be ſtrong in the Lord, *to have their feet ſhod with the preparation of the Goſpel of peace*, verſ. 15. In which advice he ſup-

poſes, that they who believed the Truth and heartily loved it, would be deſirous to propagate their belief, and perſwade others to entertain it. For all men are naturally inclined to endeavour to make others of their opinion: and the more neceſſary they apprehend any thing to be, with the greater earneſtneſs they preſs to have it generally received.

But he would have them be ſure, not to forfeit the reputation of true wiſdom, nor to loſe their integrity (which he had ſpoken of before) by being turbulent in this buſineſs: but diſpoſe themſelves to go (for that is the end of putting on ſhoes) and endeavour to ſpread the Goſpel, or Chriſtianity among their neighbours, after a peaceable manner.

Which are two counſels that contribute much to the ſecuring our Chriſtian Reſolution. For he that deſigns ſincerely to promote Religion in others, will not eaſily forſake it himſelf. And the more good any man doth, the more he is like to receive from the hand of the Lord. But we ſhall do little good, unleſs we do it in a peaceable manner: with the ſpirit of meekneſs, and love, and quietneſs; without which a man can neither be thoroughly

thorougly Religious himſelf, nor make others ſo. For nothing more takes us all off from the buſineſs of true Religion, than contentions and quarrels, though they be about Religion. Therefore we muſt follow Peace, as well as that Purity, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord: and be readily prepared rather to ſuffer any thing, than to make a buſtle and a ſtir about that which teaches us all to *ſtudy to be quiet*; and is very much diſhonoured and indangered too by our unnatural and unſeaſonable contentions.

For Souldiers, to whoſe warfare the Apoſtle here alludes, are never ſafe, but when they all agree, and are in unity one with another, as well as with their chief Commander: whoſe great leſſon is this in the Chriſtian diſcipline, *be at Peace among your ſelves*, By Chriſtian Love, Charity, and friendly Communion, we ſhall be much ſtronger againſt all aſſaults, whether from the Devil, the Fleſh, or the World, than if we fight ſingle againſt them, or, which is worſe, be divided, and at laſt, perhaps, fight one with another. For, to omit other reaſons, we ſhall invite more of the Divine power into our hearts, when we live in Unity, and

Peace, and brotherly accord, wherein He delights: but ſhall weaken our ſelves extreamly, and lye open and expoſed to the common Adverſary (both to the Devil and all his inſtruments) when like quarrelſome Souldiers, we fall out and are at fewds one with another. *For where envying and ſtrife is* (iii. Jam. 16.) *there is confuſion, and every evil work.* The Devil gets in at this breach above all others; and tempts men to the moſt dangerous ſins and moſt ſpiritual wickedneſſes. Which prove not only the ruin of particular ſouls, but of whole Societies and Churches: and therefore the cauſes of ſuch diviſions ought moſt carefully to be avoided; if we would ſtand faſt like men, and be ſtrong in the evil day.

This is a point to be now moſt diligently ſtudied, becauſe it is of great neceſſity to this Church and at this time. When we had need be all *prepared*, to maintain, at leaſt, the Truth which we profeſs: but cannot in all likelyhood ſecure, unleſs we ſtrengthen our ſelves, by being knit together moſt heartily and firmly in ſuch Brotherly affection; that, though there be too many Diſſenters,

God

God knows, who cannot or will not conform to the publick Laws yet, the peace be preſerved, and not the leaſt thing done to diſturb the ſettlement of this Church. Which, whatſoever defects any man may think it hath, is ſo well conſtituted; that as there is little hope to ſee a better, ſo if it be diſturbed, we ſhall find, to our coſt, that we have changed for one infinitely worſe: though it be one of our own making and deviſing.

Let us conſider that if the Apoſtles and others, thought themſelves obliged to propagate the Truth it ſelf in a peaceable manner; even the moſt neceſſary and eſſential Truths of the Goſpel of Chriſt, which they Preached without any diſturbance to the publick Government: much more ought we to be very careful not to unſettle a Chriſtian Church well eſtabliſhed, nor to make a rupture in it, about thoſe things, which are now controverted. Which might be better handled, and to more advantage, and hope of convincing one another, if we did live in Unity, and in the ſame Communion, notwithſtanding our differences; than when we ſeparate and divide one from another: For then we begin to look upon each other as Enemies,

and

and are not ſo apt to be moved by thoſe Arguments; which might be very effectual, if we continued knit together in the ſame Society.

But if this cannot be, yet whatſoever different perſwaſions we have about Rites and Ceremonies, and ſuch like things, I am ſure, it is every mans intereſt to be thus far a peaceable Diſſenter; as to comply with the publick order ſo far as he is able with a ſafe Conſcience; and where he cannot comply, to be quiet, not to make a ſtir by contradiction and oppoſition; but merely to omit, what he cannot do: Not reviling the Publick Eſtabliſhment, nor indeavour to bring it into contempt, and to overthrow it.

For whoſoever ſpends his zeal that way, and takes himſelf for a man of ſpirit, doth but abuſe himſelf and the Goſpel, in giving the name of courage to hardneſs of heart; and calling that reſolution, which is mere inſenſibility of Gods Holy Laws, about Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Peaceableneſs, long-ſuffering, and ſuch like Vertues. Which great things did we lay to heart, we ſhould be more quiet, and not make a quarrel about the ſmall matters, which now divide us: but rather

rather bear with what is well ſettled, and not impious; than go about to mend it by fierce oppoſitions. Which commonly produce bitter ſtriſe and contention; and that is followed by worſe diſorders: which the Apoſtles to avoid, connived at many things among the Jewiſh Chriſtians, which they by no means approved of, but deſired to ſee reformed.

And after men have done all they can, if they be not able to endure ſome things peaceably, which they do not like; they muſt ſeek for another kind of world than this, and for more perfect Creatures than Men.

There will be defects in all humane conſtitutions; there will be variety of apprehenſions, even in thoſe things which God himſelf hath declared: after never ſo many changes, we ſhall be as far from ſettlement as ever; if we will not be quiet till all things be according to our mind. And therefore I take it to be much better (as a wiſe man reſolved many years ago) to be driven on ſhore by a ſtorm, though in a crazy veſſel; than in a ſtronger to be ſtill upon a tempeſtuous ſea, in the power of the winds, and in danger of Shipwracks.

As

As for us who have conſented to be governed by the Laws of this Church, and have ſubmitted to its orders; there needs not many words, ſure, to perſwade us to lay aſide all our enmities, though never ſo ſmall, at ſuch a time as this: together with all jealouſies, ſuſpicions and evil ſurmiſes; much more all evil-ſpeakings, and whatſoever is contrary to that love which ought to be between us. We ought not, now eſpecially, to be ſo much as cold towards one another; becauſe of any differences that may happen to be in our opinions: (or which we fancy to be between us) but embrace each other with a fervent Charity; as thoſe who are linkt together by the ſame common faith, and ingaged in the ſame common cauſe, and muſt ſtand or fall together.

But in the proſecution of this weighty point I have been tranſported ſo far, that I have left but little time for the remaining; which I muſt therefore paſs over the more briefly.

IV. The next is the *Shield of Faith*, v. 16. which the Apoſtle ſaith, we muſt *above all things* guard our ſelves withal. That is, we muſt

muſt continually repreſent to our minds, by a ſtrong and lively Faith, the great rewards which Chriſt hath promiſed to his valiant followers. Theſe we muſt ever carry before our eyes, as a Souldier did his ſhield; that by an actual preſent ſenſe of them, we may beat off all aſſaults either from pleaſure or from pain, which are made upon us to move us from our duty. For either of them may be underſtood by the *fiery darts of the wicked*, which the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of: the motions to inordinate pleaſure being ſometimes no leſs hot and violent, than the grief and pain which we feel by ſore perſecutions; which are more peculiarly called in the Holy Scriptures by the name of the *Fiery Trial*. As thoſe work very fiercely upon fear, ſo do pleaſures upon deſire: and by this Faith we ſhall be able to vanquiſh both. Witneſs the Confeſſors and Martyrs, who having firſt overcome themſelves; could not be moved from their ſtedfaſtneſs, when they ſaw a real Fire before them, into which they were threatned to be thrown, if they did not recant the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. This *Shield of Faith* was their ſecurity, they being fully perſwa-

ded, that Chriſt our Lord, who is greater than all Kings, having all power in Heaven and Earth, would raiſe them from the dead to an immortal, and more glorious life; if they did not, to gain or ſave the beſt thing in this world, break any of his Sacred Laws.

For this Faith was ſo potent, that it wrought in them a lively hope; which is the next thing.

V. *And take the Helmet of Salvation* (verſ. 17.) which in the 1 *Theſſ.* v. 8. is called the *Hope of Salvation.* This he compares to a *Helmet* (which you know is the Armor of the head) becauſe the bleſſed hope of immortal Glory hereafter, and of Gods ſpecial favour, love and protection here, makes a Man erect himſelf, and lift up his head, as we ſay; with confidence and boldneſs, in the midſt of the greateſt terrors and dangers; knowing they ſhall not hurt him, but rather bring Salvation to him. With this Hope therefore we muſt fill our hearts; which is the fruit of Faith, when Faith works by love and makes us faithful unto God. Then we may have a *lively hope* in him;

him; and this Hope will make us not only ſtrong, and ſo full of courage, that we ſhall not quail or be caſt down by any dreadful appearance of dangers, but inable us to *rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God.*

VI. To which he adds, *The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,* or the Holy Scriptures. For they are the Treaſury of thoſe Sacred Promiſes, which are the great ſupport of our Souls; the Repoſitory or Magazine (as I may call them) wherein are laid up thoſe *Truths* (ſpoken of in the beginning) which we muſt oppoſe to all the temptations, which either aſſault our Faith and Hope, or would ſeduce us from our Obedience. And therefore our buſineſs muſt be to ſtudy the Holy Scriptures diligently, till we be well skill'd in them, and have learnt to wield this weapon aright; and thereby cut in ſunder all objections, as our Bleſſed Saviour did, when the Devil tempted him in the Wilderneſs. And by no means ſuffer any body to wreſt this *Sword* out of our hand: for if they do, they have ſo effectually diſarmed us; that we may in time yield to any thing. They may make us believe

what they pleaſe; having our Faith in their keeping: and likewiſe do what they pleaſe; perſwading us the beſt ſervice we can do to God, is to be the greateſt Enemies, diſturbers and deſtroyers of mankind.

VII. *Laſtly*, All theſe will be the more effectual, if by ardent Prayer (as the Apoſtle adviſes, *verſ.* 18.) we call in the aſſiſtance of Heaven; *Praying alway with all Prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, watching thereunto, with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all Saints.* For, as it is not enough to be thus armed and appointed for the combate, unleſs God be preſent with us, (which we ought to believe He will, as I told you at firſt, becauſe he hath ſaid He will) ſo it is not ſufficient to rely upon his word and ſtedfaſtly believe it; but He expects to be ſolicited for his aid, by our earneſt Prayers and Supplications.

This He hath commanded, as much as for the other we have his promiſe. And our very Prayers make us ſtrong, by giving us a more lively ſenſe of God (if they be not cold and careleſs) and a more vigorous apprehenſion of his love, and of our Heavenly

venly Country; to which they lift up our minds. And beſides, they derive more ſtrength from Him; when we faithfully importune Him, that he will inable us to diſcharge all the duties of good Chriſtians, in every condition. And they intitle us alſo to his powerful protection, when we commend our ſelves intirely to His Providence, and truſt all we have with Him. Which likewiſe mightily raiſes our ſpirits, and gives us a higher degree of ſtrength, confidence, and courage; when we think we have made Him our friend by thus intruſting Him, and relying wholly upon Him, to make us happy in what way He himſelf pleaſes.

And if all Chriſtians made a Conſcience alſo, *to Pray one for another*, it might ſtill be of greater force, and avail more toward our Salvation. For ſo the Apoſtle would have us, *make ſupplication for all ſaints*, that is, Chriſtians: that they alſo may be indued with the power of Chriſt, and get the victory over their ſpiritual Enemies.

And theſe Prayers would be ſtill more prevalent, did we all *perſevere*, as he ſays, in our Supplications; and *Pray always*, at all times of prayer; and that *in the ſpirit*; very ardently,

ardently, and with ſuch fervent deſires for ſpiritual aid from Heaven, as we feel for thoſe things, we moſt need for this mortal life. And this alſo, with ſo great care and ſolicitude, that we *watch* for opportunities of Prayer: and, when great dangers preſs us, take ſome time from our ſleep, or other occaſion, for this Heavenly converſe with God our Saviour.

This is a thing wherein we are too defective; and ſo find our ſelves faint and weak in the performance of the reſt of the duties of Chriſtian life: becauſe we languiſh in our Devotion, eſpecially in our COMMON PRAYER; when we meet together to Pray, not only for our ſelves, but for one another; for the *King* particularly, the *Royal Family*, the *great Council* of the Kingdom, the *Clergy*, and *all People*, of whatſoever order or condition they be. Whom if we did commend to God with greater earneſtneſs, and true fervour of affection, we ſhould find, I am confident, as happy effects of our Prayer, as we our ſelves deſire. We ſhould either, for inſtance, prevail with God, to *turn from us all thoſe evils, which we moſt righteouſly have deſerved*; or to enable

able us, ſo *to put our full truſt and confidence in his mercy*, as notwithſtanding any troubles, *to ſerve him evermore in holineſs, and pureneſs of living, to his honour and glory.*

To ſumme up all that hath been ſaid; The Apoſtle in this Diſcourſe compares Chriſtians unto Souldiers: who being to conflict with their Enemies, took care, as not to want weapons themſelves ſo, not to leave any part of their bodies uncovered and expoſed to the weapons of their Adverſaries. The middle of their body they girt about with a *Belt*; upon their Breſt they wore a *Breſt-plate*; upon their Head a *Helmet*; *Greaves* (as they are called in the ſtory of *Goliath*) upon their legs; a *ſhield* they carried in their left hand, and a *ſword* in their right; and being thus appointed they called upon their Gods for help and ſuccour. Such a complete Armour muſt we Chriſtians put on, if we will conflict ſucceſsfully with our ſpiritual Enemies: who are of little force to do us any harm; if they always find us armed with *Truth* in our mind, with *Integrity* in our heart, with *Purity and peaceableneſs* in our affections, with *Faith* in Gods promiſes, and *hope* of his Salvation;

vation (working both in mind and heart and affections) with the *word of God* often in our hand, and with devout *Prayers* and Supplications in our mouth (proceeding from our very heart and moſt intimate deſires) whereby we conſtantly implore both for our ſelves and our fellow Chriſtians, the gracious aſſiſtance of Him, who is the *Captain of our Salvation*; and by theſe means got the victory, and won the Crown, which He now wears at God's right hand.

And be you well aſſured, that in this way, by being trained up in Chriſtian knowledg, and ſincere love to what you know to be your duty; by Faith, by Hope, by reading and meditating in the Holy Scriptures, by ardent Prayer to the Almighty (eſpecially in ſincere fellowſhip and communion one with another) you ſhall prevail likewiſe: and get the better of every thing that oppoſes your ſincere reſolution to do and ſuffer the whole will of Chriſt Jeſus.

In Him therefore incourage your ſelves, and receive this word of Exhortation which the Apoſtle here gives us, *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Fortifie your

your ſelves with a firm belief, that he is able to ſend you relief, and that He will not fail to ſuccour you from above; if you reſolutely indeavour to do your duty, in the way that He hath preſcribed you.

The words ſeem to me, to be the very ſame with thoſe of the Lord to *Joſhua* (when he was to enter into *Canaan*, and ſubdue that Country) which are repeated thrice within the compaſs of a few Verſes. i. *Joſh.* 6. *Be ſtrong and of a good courage*; and verſ. 7. *only be thou ſtrong and very couragious*; and again verſ. 9. *Have not I commanded thee? be ſtrong and of a good courage: neither be thou diſmayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, whitherſoever thou goeſt.* From which words you may take the trueſt interpretation of my Text; and look upon *Joſhua* and the *Iſraelites*, as a lively picture of the ſtate of us Chriſtians. The Lord promiſed to be with him, whitherſoever he went, and bad him nothing doubt, but by his ſtrength he ſhould vanquiſh all the *Canaanites*. But for all this he and the *Iſraelites* were to go up armed againſt them, and both to fight

according to ſuch directions as He gave them, and to keep themſelves from every polluted thing, which He forbad them: and not depend merely on the arm of the Almighty, to give them the victory. Even ſo muſt we ſtrengthen our ſelves in our Bleſſed Lord, and the power of his might; and think we hear Him ſay to us, Have not I commanded you? be ſtrong therefore, and of a good courage: be not diſmayed, I the Lord am with you, whitherſoever you go, and whatſoever you do; and by me you ſhall overcome all difficulties. But we muſt not ſo truſt to this Power of his, as to be remiſs and negligent our ſelves; no, He will ſtrengthen and impower us, if we put on the *whole Armour of God*; and fight againſt our own paſſions and evil deſires, the worlds temptations and the Devils ſuggeſtions: continually oppoſing to them, Faith, and Hope, and the word of God, and Prayer, and an honeſt reſolution not to yield by any means to their importunities; but to be the more excited by their ſolicitations, to uſe our moſt earneſt indeavours to vanquiſh them. Then as *David* ſaith to his Son *Solomon* (perſwading him

to

to enter upon a great work, 1 *Chron.* xxviij. 20.) ſo may I ſay to every one of you; *Be ſtrong and of a good courage and do it: fear not, neither be diſmayed: for the Lord God will be with thee, He will not fail thee nor forſake thee, until thou haſt finiſhed all the work for the ſervice of the Houſe of the Lord.*

It is for God and for His glory, that we fight reſolutely againſt the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, and therefore why ſhould we doubt of his aid, when by the Victory He will be honoured as well as our ſelves? We, not only may but, ought to ask it, and to expect it with a humble confidence in his Almighty Goodneſs: who hath told us He will deny us nothing, which we beg in the Name of the Lord Jeſus. And what can we beg of Him more acceptable to Him, as well as neceſſary for us, than this; that we may be able (in our place and ſtation, and in every condition) to do Him all faithful ſervice? And when will his Name, think you, be more prevalent, and obtain greater Salvation for us, than when (according to his own particular order and laſt deſire) we make mention of it, and

commemorate his love, in the Communion of his body and blood?

There we may offer up our Prayers and Meditations in the moſt acceptable and prevailing manner. There alſo we may excite our Faith, and quicken our Hope, and inflame our Charity, and knit our ſelves one to another in Brotherly love, and ingage to Him our Fidelity: and by all theſe means receive a greater increaſe of ſtrength and courage, to do and to endure whatſoever He would have us.

And therefore let me admoniſh you of this, for a concluſion of this diſcourſe (in which I have delivered, or rather the Apoſtle taught us, many important truths, but none perhaps of greater moment than this) that when the Apoſtle adviſes us here to Pray *with all Prayer and Supplication*, this way of praying and ſupplicating, by making a commemoration of Chriſts Death and Paſſion in the Holy Euchariſt, where we repreſent to God how He offered himſelf a Sacrifice for us, is certainly included. This is one ſort of Prayer; and the chiefeſt among Chriſtian people: nay, the moſt proper to them of all other.

From

From whence we may ſafely conclude, that they who neglect this, lye more open to temptations than other men. They have not put on the *whole Armour* of God; but want a principal part of it, and that part which is moſt properly Chriſtian: and therefore muſt blame themſelves that they are no better men; but are ſo frequently overcome, and fall into ſin, even againſt their reſolutions (perhaps) and notwithſtanding their Prayers, and their looking up to the Lord Jeſus for help. There is a great thing ſtill wanting; they do not uſe all the means that He hath appointed for the obtaining of his help. There is one manner of addreſs to Him, which they either live in a conſtant neglect of, or but ſeldom apply themſelves ſeriouſly to its ſolemn uſe. For if they did in good earneſt and with all their hearts, *do this often* in remembrance of Him, as He hath required; they would find their Chriſtian reſolution mightily fortified, and their ſouls indued with much ſtrength, to do all the reſt of the will of Chriſt.

Nay, they would at laſt do their duty, though in it ſelf difficult, chearfully and triumphant-

triumphantly, saying with St. *Paul*, elsewhere (viij. *Rom.* 35, &c.) *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulations, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerours, through Him that loved us.* To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever, *Amen.*

FINIS.

XUM